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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18381

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT FR
SUBJECT: MICHEL CREPEAU AND THE FUTURE OF THE LEFT
RADICAL PARTY

REF: PARIS 16405

SUMMARY: DEPUTY AND MAYOR OF LA ROCHELLE, MICHEL CREPEAU NOW HOPES TO USE THE PRESIDENCY OF THE LEFT RADICAL PARTY (MRG) TO MOLD A NATIONAL MOVEMENT AROUND THE ISSUES WHICH HAVE BROUGHT SUCCESS AND NOTORIETY ON THE LOCAL LEVEL -- CONSUMER PROTECTION, ECOLOGY, EDUCATION, CULTURE, AUDIO-VISUAL, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT. TIME IS SHORT BECAUSE THE MRG'S FUTURE HINGES LARGELY ON THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
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ELECTIONS OF JUNE 1979: FIVE PERCENT OR MORE AND THE PARTY LIVES ON, LESS THAN FIVE PERCENT AND THE MRG COULD WELL DISINTEGRATE. CREPEAU HIMSELF IS CLOSE TO SOCIALIST (PS) NATIONAL SECRETARY MICHEL ROCARD, TO THE POINT OF SUGGESTING THE LONG-TERM POSSIBILITY OF A ROCARD/CREPEAU ALLIANCE, SHOULD ROCARD FINALLY DECIDE THAT HIS FUTURE IS OUTSIDE OF THE PS.

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1. POLITICAL "COMMANDOS": NEWLY-ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE LEFT RADICAL PARTY MICHEL CREPEAU LUNCHED WITH DCM AND EMBOFF JUNE 7 AND TALKED AT LENGTH OF HIS PLANS FOR REJUVENATING THE ORGANIZATION. CENTRAL TO CREPEAU'S LEADERSHIP WILL BE AN EFFORT TO EXPLOIT SEVERAL KEY ISSUES (E.G., CONSUMER PROTECTION, EDUCATION AND AUDIO-VISUAL) WHICH HAVE NOT YET FOUND A POLITICAL EXPRESSION, BUT WHICH MIGHT BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE INNOVATIVE, HIGH INTENSITY APPROACH WHICH THE NEW MRG PROPOSES. THE LEFT RADICALS WILL BECOME "COMMANDOS," A SMALL CORE OF DEDICATED, SKILLFUL ACTIVISTS OPERATING AGAINST WELL-DEFINED TARGETS, UNLIKE THE PARTIES OF MASS WHICH MUST BE ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.

2. THE FIVE-PERCENT TEST: UNFORTUNATELY, CREPEAU WILL NOT HAVE LONG TO DEVELOP THIS PROJECT. THE MAKE OR BREAK TEST FOR THE MRG COULD EASILY BE THE JUNE 1979 CONTEST FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FOR WHICH CREPEAU SAID A SEPARATE LEFT RADICAL LIST IS A VIRTUAL CERTAIN-TY. HE WILL AVOID THE ISSUE UNTIL MID-SEPTEMBER WHEN HE HAS HAD TIME TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN LEADERSHIP AND WHEN THE ANTI-PARLIAMENTARIAN VENDETTA, SO EVIDENT AT THE PARTY CONGRESS (REFTEL), HAS HAD TIME TO DIE AWAY. SAYS CREPEAU, "WE'D BE FOOLISH NOT TO PUT FORWARD OUR PROVEN WINNERS (I.E., DEPUTIES)," SOMETHING THE RECENT CONFIDENTIAL

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CONGRESS WOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED.

3. AS FOR THE FIVE PERCENT BARRIER (BELOW WHICH A LIST RECEIVES NO REPRESENTATION WHATSOEVER), CREPEAU EX-PRESSED GUARDED OPTIMISM. HE BELIEVES THAT RADICALISM STLL STRIKES A CHORD IN FRENCH SOCIETY AND THAT THERE IS ROOM ON THE LEFT FOR A NON-MARXIST, HUMANIST OPTION. HE NOTED SEVERAL FACTORS WHICH WILL HELP THE MRG IN 1979:

-- SOME WELL-KNOWN PERSONALITIES TO HEAD THE LIST, SUCH AS MAURICE FAURE, FORMER MINISTER AND SIGNER OF THE TREATY OF ROME;

-- A VERY PRO-EUROPEAN POLITICAL POSITION;

-- LIMITED VOTER INTEREST, WITH THOSE PARTICIPAT-ING GENERALLY MORE POLITICALLY SOPHISTICATED AND THUS MORE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY EVEN THE MRG'S RELATIVELY MODEST CAMPAIGN;

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 18381

-- A SINGLE NATIONAL LIST, MAKING DISTRICT BY
DISTRICT CAMPAIGNING LESS IMPORTANT.

4. SHOULD THE MRG NOT MAKE THE FIVE PERCENT CUTOFF, CREPEAU BELIEVES THE PARTY'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE WOULD BE IN DANGER, FROM LACK OF INTEREST MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. EITHER THE MRG DEMONSTRATES THAT IT IS THE NATION'S FIFTH POLITICAL FORCE OR IT WILL BE SWALLOWED UP BY ITS LARGER COMPETITORS TO LEFT AND RIGHT. AS FOR REUNIFICATION OF THE RADICAL MOVEMENT, CREPEAU SEES NO POSSIBILITY AND IN FACT IS AGAINST THE IDEA OF THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS RALLLNG TO HIM -- "I DON'T NEED
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THAT BAND OF OPPORTUNISTS, NONE OF WHOM (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER) HAS HAD A NEW IDEA IN YEARS." HE LIKEWISE CALLS HIS INTERNAL MRG OPPOSITION OPPORTUNISTIC AND FEELS CONFIDENT THAT HE COMMANDS THE LOYALTIES OF THE PARTY'S BEST BRAINS AND BEST POLITICIANS.

5. A ROCARD OPTION?: IN PERHAPS HIS MOST INTRIGUING REMARK, CREPEAU MENTIONED A LONG-TERM HYPOTHESIS INVOLVING AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND MICHEL ROCARD. HE VERY CLEARLY LEANS TOWARD ROCARD AS THE SOCIALISTS' BEST CHOICE FOR 1981 AND AS THE NATION'S BEST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. COMMENT: IN THAT VEIN, THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE MRG TAKES ON ADDED IMPORTANCE AS IT MIGHT HYPOTHETICALLY PROVIDE ONE OF THE BASES FOR LAUNCHING A ROCARD BID FOR THE ELYSEE OUTSIDE OF THE PS. ONE MUST HASTEN TO ADD THAT ROCARD HAS EVERY INTENTION AT PRESENT OF REMAINING WITHIN THE PS, THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS FAR AND AWAY HIS FIRST OPTION FOR THE FUTURE. THE CREPEAU/ROCARD ANGLE IS INTERESTING ONLY IN THE CASE OF A ROCARD COMPLETELY FRUSTRATED WITHIN THE PS AND FINALLY FORCED TO ABANDON ANY HOPE OF EVENTUALLY MOVING THAT MACHINE TO HIS ENDS, AN EVENTUALITY THAT IS PROBABLY AT LEAST A YEAR OR MORE AWAY. NONETHELESS, IT IS AN ANGLE WORTH NOTING.
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